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## BOOK REVIEWS.

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*Deutsche Wirtschaftsgeschichte in den letzten Jahrhunderten des Mittelalters.* By DR. KARL THEODOR VON INAMA-STERNEGG. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot; Part I, 1899, Part II, 1901. 8vo, pp. xxi + 455 and xviii + 559.

DR. VON INAMA-STERNEGG's monumental history of the economic life of the German race is now complete to the close of the Middle Ages. The third volume, consisting of two parts, one published in 1899 and the other in 1901, is practically an independent work, but it supplements and rounds out the story told in the first two volumes. The first volume of this great work, published in 1879, covered the period from the first appearance of the German race in the history of Europe down to the time of Charlemagne. The second, appearing in 1891, brought the narrative down to the twelfth century, at which point it is taken up by the third volume now before us. In the concluding words of the preface to the second part of this volume, the author expresses his earnest hope that he may be granted time and strength to follow these three with still another volume outlining the principal features of modern Germanic economic history. In this wish all his readers will devoutly join.

For well-nigh thirty years Dr. von Inama has devoted his labor incessantly, although, as he unnecessarily reminds us, not exclusively, to this investigation. Of the result as a whole he says, with a fine burst of patriotic enthusiasm: "More than a thousand years have been traversed, a period long enough and surely significant enough to enable us to understand what strenuous effort it cost to evolve from a heterogeneous collection of peoples with crude, rough wants and an equally crude equipment of means for their satisfaction, one of the leading civilized nations; and to develop from the weakest beginnings of political unity a true body politic so richly endowed with wealth." This citation well illustrates von Inama's point of view and method of study. He does not isolate the economic forces from the social and political. Social growth is conceived as the result of the interaction of all three. Possibly no period better illustrates the constant play of

these forces one upon the other than that which is treated in the present work.

The "last centuries of the Middle Ages" were marked by great progress in the material well-being of the various branches of the German race. The great Teutonic colonization movement, the history of which was told us in the earlier volumes, came to an end in this period. East and west, north and south, the twelfth century found the German people settling down in their new homes. Everywhere population which had been in a state of flux was gradually forming itself into orderly ranks and classes. Even the primary institutions of society were being reorganized. During the next three centuries the distribution and the administration of landed property—the entire agrarian constitution—underwent far-reaching changes. The methods of agriculture were improved, new products sought and introduced, and a new meaning was given to the status of him who tilled the soil. At the same time, and possibly most significant of all, manufactures and commerce sprang up where they had never existed before and contributed in mighty fashion to the progress of the Germanic race.

The treatment of the history of this period is necessarily different from that accorded the earlier centuries. While the earlier history is genetic and pragmatic, the latter is descriptive and analytic, a faithful picturing of the economic life of the people. The number and the nature of the historical sources rendered this possible. So large an amount of labor has already been expended by German scholars upon the unearthing and editing of these sources that no one person can even survey the whole field, let alone master it. The economic historian is therefore forced to depend upon the skill with which he can select the typical facts or incidents from the multitude he has to study.

The migration of the Germans in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries took on a different form from that which marked the preceding periods. Instead of occupying large areas with scattered peasant settlements in small villages, they now built cities. All of the cities of what is now Saxony arose during or after the twelfth century, and no less than one hundred cities were founded in Brandenburg during the thirteenth. The greater personal liberties and the new opportunities for industry and commerce which the cities afforded were the attractions which drew the people to them. The natural consequence—new industries and expanding markets—were, however, slow to reveal themselves. Until well into the thirteenth century each city with its contiguous rural population formed a practically self-sufficing eco-

conomic unit. There was no sharp sundering of the city from the country, either economically or administratively. Meager as are the sources of information concerning the population and its density, yet there is sufficient evidence to show that the rise of the cities affected large numbers of people.

The first evidence of the coming changes is in the new significance which class distinctions acquired. The determination of status, the crystallization of society into ranks, which took place in the earlier period, was completed by the end of the twelfth century. The fixed categories of status relationships which are mirrored in the laws of the thirteenth century are evidence that the forces which created them were spent. Although these ranks were not formally disturbed during the remainder of the Middle Ages, yet they gained an economic meaning probably lacking before, and there arose among them new classes based wholly upon callings. Thus the distinction between a peasant class and a burgher class began to be mentioned in the twelfth century and was generally recognized in the thirteenth. Even the status of the exclusive noble, that of the official, and that of the priest came to be regarded as in a measure determined by calling or profession. Similarity of occupation, and hence similarity of condition, in life gave to the older distinctions much of the significance they continued to possess. The peasant was kept in his humble social status mainly by force of his poverty, which in turn arose from his inability to fully control his land. Although agriculture rose absolutely with the improvement in the agrarian constitution and in methods, yet the agricultural population fell back relatively, not making as much advance as did the other classes. Land and its ownership as a source of revenue lost its earlier relative importance.

The economic significance of the control of land at the beginning of this epoch is well illustrated by the ceaseless strivings of the Germanic kings to increase the estates of their realms and of their houses. This was the foundation of their financial and political power as sovereigns. The ground rents and feudal dues had become primarily real burdens and afforded revenues which were independent of all changes in the personal relations of the contributors. Those revenues, though modest, were certain. In contrast with them, the personal taxes afforded but a limited and uncertain source of revenue. The poverty and weakness of the same kings toward the end of the period, as compared with the relative opulence of the cities, illustrate in turn the extent of the economic changes.

The agrarian changes of this period are so numerous that they almost defy condensation. Indeed, the interest centers in the new details presented rather than in the main results. A few of the most important changes only can be mentioned. The sovereigns who maintained their power did so by obtaining control of new sources of revenue; fees, royalties, taxes, and public credit taking the place of ground rents and feudal dues. The great landed proprietors—that once powerful middle class between the sovereign and the serf—were shorn of their revenues. Their incomes declined both absolutely and relatively. They lost their rents and the services and dues of many of their serfs, who in turn gained in liberty and independence. The petty nobles and the knights suffered most and before the end of the Middle Ages occupied a position that was little above that of the true peasant. On the other hand, the peasants as a class rose in economic, if not in social, position. There was a clearer definition of their landholdings as distinct from those of the lords, also of their rights and of their obligations. *Meyer* tenure quite generally took the place of *Leibeigenschaft*. At the same time there was a decline in the size of peasant holdings. The old *Königshufen* of fifty hectares were often broken up into halves and even into quarters. This was due to the increasing pressure of population and brought, in time, new methods of cultivation and more intensive cultivation of the soil. With expanding markets in the growing cities, the peasant, now free to follow his own interests, was given the opportunity for a diversification of crops. Vegetables, fruits and garden stuffs, eggs, fowl, and other similar products were readily disposed of in the weekly markets. Flax and other fibers and dyestuffs were also in demand for the growing industries. In short, the rise of a money economy wrought the economic emancipation of agriculture and the wages system here and there entered this stronghold of custom and status.

The second part of Vol. III takes up the industrial and commercial history of the period. For the modern economist this is perhaps the most interesting part of the whole work, for in it we find the germs of the more dominant features of modern economic institutions.

Step by step the author unfolds the economic development of the German people during the three last centuries of the Middle Ages. From a time marked by great simplicity of living with few wants, meager forms of industry, and crude technical appliances, the story passes over to conditions which seem to us in many respects

wholly modern. At the close of the Middle Ages the German people were rich in national culture and possessions. Although as late as the middle of the twelfth century the best among them could with difficulty write in their mother-tongue, and their economic life was of the same low order as their culture, yet in the fifteenth century we find that the soil is under good cultivation, the forests felled, the mines opened, and the German can marshal in grain, wood, and metals the riches of his land. The German merchant rules the sea and is familiar with every part of Europe. The German handicrafts and arts, represented by masters in every branch, fill the homes in all the cities with costly furnishings, and foreign markets with their wares. Money and credit have developed their fertilizing activities on every side. And, as if still more to remind us of modern times, while the public powers seek with painful exactitude to maintain security and order in all industrial activities, yet the shadow of undue exploitation, unrestricted competition, sordid speculation, strikes, and social strife are already falling over this fair picture.

The causes of this whole uplifting, which in so short a time made the German people so rich, stand revealed as perhaps as never before. Foremost of all is the expansion of the territory over which the German held sway—a territory won by peaceful labor as much as by the sword. Knight and peasant, merchant and craftsman, have each an equal share in the glory. The sturdy character of the people had been trained in the rugged school of the feudal manor with a more liberal allowance elsewhere of local autonomy. The crusades have lifted the minds of the people from the clods of the soil, sharpened their eyes to distant opportunities, and strengthened their zeal. Insistent necessity also played its part in the advance through the constant pressure upon the means of subsistence which arose with the rapid increase of population in the limited area.

Contemporaneous with the great colonization movement was the expansion of the city sites, and with the differentiation of city from rural life came a sort of national division of labor. The handicrafts broke the bonds which had held them so close to agriculture: similar activities strengthened one another and rose together from the narrow limits of the village to meet the more varied and richer demands of greater centers of population. Livelier, steadier markets developed for the exchange of the products of city and country and for that inter-city traffic which prepared the way for international commerce.

The third great cause which contributed to this marked economic

advance was the surrounding and eventual command of the northern seas by German influences. Until well into the twelfth century there was little talk of a German merchant marine; but soon thereafter the German merchant is seen gaining a footing in London and pressing on with resistless energy and courage to inveigle all lands into an ever-increasing net of trade connections with the Fatherland. With diligence and political shrewdness they build up a closed system of national commercial policy. The riches of the whole Germanic and part of the Slavonic world are gathered into the warehouses and graneries of the Hanseatics to build up that national capital which is to make possible a further growth of industry. Never perhaps was the productive power of trade better illustrated than in that development. The far-reaching influence of the union of German cities over the trade of the seas, especially, rested on the development of the varied means of production, each of which was carried to a high stage of perfection. So secure was the economic position of Germany that it stood even the shock of the Black Death far better than any other country.

In the fifteenth century, the close of the period covered in this volume, this rapidly acquired prosperity of German industry and commerce began to wane. Their markets were narrowed. Flanders and Brabant left the Hanseatic league. England established an independent commercial policy. On the north and on the east the German merchants met new competitors. The Hansa, no longer so ably seconded by the government, lost its hold on Russia and on Poland. The oriental connections were lost at the time of the Turkish conquest of Asia Minor. In consequence the German cities fell off in population, prices both of the products of the soil and those of industry declined, and even wages showed a downward tendency.

Such are the main outlines of this last volume. The details of the story are well beyond the limits of a review to depict. The book begins with a survey of the guilds. Their history is traced from the period of dependence upon overlords, when they were semi-religious or social brotherhoods, through the period when the cities assumed the place of the overlords and controlled the guilds, subjecting them to all manner of restraints, to the final culmination of the glory of the guilds when they virtually dominated the cities. Much emphasis is laid upon the fact that each city necessarily developed its own policy in regard to the guilds and to trade. This is perhaps the most important of the many new facts presented concerning the mediæval organizations of industry.

The main features of the development of German commerce have been suggested above. The culmination is found after the restrictive policy of the empire, the power of the overlords, and the regulations of the cities have passed away, when the Hanseatic league grasped the idea of a national policy of expansion. Inadequate as von Inama finds the materials from which he had to work to be, yet from them he has sketched with convincing clearness the main outlines of the history of the Hansa. He shows us how great merchants of the Hansa established security for markets and routes, waged relentless war on the pirates of the Baltic, made their cities more than mere warehouses, acted as the brokers for all Europe, handled vast quantities of fish, grain, wine, leather, cloth, and timber, and equalized the distribution of these staples over Europe.

Although the available data for a study of the history of money and prices are yet meager, what information there is has been marshaled with a master-hand. The multitudinous varieties of weights, measures, and of coins which the well-nigh numberless principalities and sovereignties of mediæval Germany used may well defy classification, and it is hard to see how even a more thorough overhauling of the archives will afford a basis for any more certain conclusions than those which the author characterizes as "crude hypotheses."

It is a great work, well done—an indispensable reference-book for all students of economic history.

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*L'Evolution économique et sociale de l'industrie de la laine en Angleterre.* By LAURENT DECHESNE. Paris: Librairie de la Société du Recueil Général des Lois et des Arrêts, L. Larose, 1900. 8vo, pp. 282.

THIS monograph contains very little information that is new, very little, indeed, that is not to be found in books that are well known and accessible. The author, however, has done meritorious service in collecting and arranging a somewhat scattered mass of facts and interpretations of facts, and in putting them before us in a connected and interesting manner.

M. Dechesne undertakes to trace the evolution of the English woolen industry from its beginnings to the present day. He thinks that the long history of this evolution falls naturally into five periods: